

Date: April 12, 2021

Time: 6:45 – 8:45 pm

Location: Remote Participation, via Zoom

Agenda

- 1. Zoom protocols (2 mins)**
- 2. Review of mission statement and group meeting protocols (3 mins)**
- 3. Brief introductions (15 mins)**
- 4. Co-chair announcements (15 mins)**
- 5. Approve March minutes (5 mins)**
- 6. DTG social media & website status (5-10 min)**
- 7. The Incubator (15 mins)**
 - a. Brooks Harrelson: (1) Municipal Scholarship Equality Index and (2) monthly meetings that DTG could hold, e.g., watch video and comment session
- 8. Warrant Article Discussions: (5 min presentation, 10 min discussion, 5 min vote = 20 min per article)**
 - a. Barbara Thornton: Accessory Dwelling Units
 - b. Lynette Culverhouse: Teardown Moratorium
- 9. New business brought by members**

Minutes:

In attendance: Katell Guellec, Rebecca Gruber, Brooks Harrelson, Marian Weisenfeld, Kellye Eversole, Christina Harrison, Scott Lever, Stephanie Ettinger de Cuba, Laura Kiesel, Becca Persson, Elizabeth Dray, Lynette Culverhouse, Louise Popkin, Barbara Thornton, Chris DiMeo

Introductions: Word for Tonight: exhausted, learning, anticipation, disgusted and raw, anger, initiative and intentional and tunnel-visioned, relentless, disappointed and stressed, recovery, fragmented, hopeful

Co-chair announcements: Next month will be Katell's last month as co-chair. Shared thank-you note from Oren. Effort to reach out to the Arlington community to invite them to DTG's monthly meetings.

Motion to approve March minutes voted unanimously yes.

DTG social media and website status: opportunities to share information that is generated by this group, to elevate diversity work that is being done or needs to be done, and to advertise that we exist. Envision Arlington grants and resources that have been available in the past to do some types of administrative things. And DTG would still need to moderate. Have had a high school intern assigned to DTG, and they have taken on the content management of our Facebook page (no intern this year due to Covid). Hopeful will resume in the fall. It's time consuming, but not hard to manage. Payment for the website has been by a DTG member, but should be transferred to Envision. The Facebook page might need to be re-set up to be more organization (rather than historically individual) focused. Envision Arlington has a Facebook page, and DTG could be included. The Envision Arlington Facebook page is moderated by the Town. Mentoring offered to interns can be very valuable to them. Interns like to have a specific project in addition to the more general activities they do.

The incubator:

Municipal Scholarship Equity Index: Aiming to address "discipline gap" that results in "achievement gap" across racial/cultural lines; modeled on the Human Rights Campaign LGBTQ+ Municipal Equality Index Scorecard. Spoke to the Director of the UCLA Center for Civil Rights Remedies who said he did not know of a similar effort and offered to help. Approached Paul Schlichtman, School Committee, indicated interest also. Reaching out to the NAACP, Human Rights Campaign, authors of the referenced studies, various professors to discuss how to put together such a scholastic scorecard. Would like help, endorsement and participation. Michael Bronstein has joined Envision Arlington to re-establish the Education Taskforce; would be a big ally. Human Rights Campaign is a national organization that relies on local implementation. Great idea, seconded by many. Charles Hamilton Houston Institute has great programming, "especially around the school to prison pipeline." The Network for Social Justice in Winchester has started doing some of this work and would be good to collaborate with. Been pointed to the Barbara Bush Foundation that funds grants for this kind of work. Harvard Graduate School of Education might be interested.

Monthly Meetings that DTG Could Hold: For those who identify as white to discuss how they're coming to understand racism, privilege, etc.; would be a safe space for open discussion for those who agree and disagree that privilege exists. A second group for those who identify as BIPOC to discuss what is happening and what they'd like to see happen. A third group might be a place for discussion of pertinent diversity and equity topics, sponsoring community discussion on a range of topics that we have a wealth of local expertise to tap into. We could sponsor by-stander training. Need to be making huge efforts to bring people together face-to-face for discussion; face-to-face results in a different type of communication than on social media. A group called Divergence brings people together from polar opposites of the political divide; there is a local resource that we could contact. We could discuss this further at the next meeting. Better Angels (previous name of the organization) has done work in bringing people together, provides moderators. Historically these efforts at DTG need a point person to carry this forward.

Another incubator idea is a volunteer fair to provide opportunities to re-engage volunteers. Will be done under the auspices of Envision Arlington.

Warrant Articles:

Barbara Thornton: ADU

Asking for endorsement for the passage of article 43, accessory dwelling unit. Appropriate for DTG because 34% of Arlington residents live alone and have lower household income. Very few single-bedroom units to rent here, and they are competing for 2-BR units. Hits special groups of people, including elderly on fixed income, who need the extra income that comes with renting out these units; single people; adult children not ready to live independently; young people starting out. Technically not "Affordable" with respect to income limits. Can't be bigger than 900 sq ft or 50% of building total sq ft.

Questions:

1. Why does it relate to DTG? Increases economic diversity in Arlington.
2. What is the maximum square feet? 900 sq feet or 50% of total building size, whichever is smaller.
3. How many low-income, older people can afford to take advantage of this because of the cost of creating space as ADU? Have to be a homeowner, not a developer. Could take a second mortgage and then the income would pay that mortgage. Also, real estate transfer tax should be able to be used to pay for an ADU in the future.
4. What is the average rent for a town like Arlington for ADUs? No one is keeping track; nationally they do well but haven't taken off in MA, in part because of many restrictions.
5. Adding an ADU could be seen as a form of gentrification. Taking an affordable home and making it into a home that isn't affordable. Not true because the income from the ADU will make it more attractive to buy, making the mortgage more affordable. This article also will ensure that code standards are better met, making it safer.
6. Three kinds: 1. In the house 2. Bump out and attach to house 3. Carriage house model (moratorium on last kind for six months).
7. Comment was offered about the benefits of ADUs for housing senior family members, as well as single, working people. Also, it's a healthy trend for Arlington where people are "over-housed," especially in the Heights.
8. Are there any studies on how these houses change in value? It may not be as high as some think, and the income could offset those costs.

Vote: Yes: 9

Lynette Culverhouse: Teardown moratorium

Article 46, moratorium for tear-down of Capes and other small homes with footprint of 1,000 or less sq feet.

This is 871 houses in Arlington. Lynette showed the house value before and after teardowns. Concern is that we are destroying historically significant homes. No one is building Cape houses. They are relatively affordable. Creating a town of extreme wealth and poverty with

nothing in the middle. Also research shows that the environmental impact of a teardown is far greater than renovation. Trees and green spaces are being torn down. Took this to ARB, and it was voted no action; they wanted a study group and no moratorium, but action is needed now.

Asking Town to work with Historic Commission to include more style of homes. Preserve trees and green spaces. Preserve architectural history.

Needs to write a substitute motion.

Questions/Discussion:

1. We don't want to exclude wealthy people. Also, what happens to people who want to sell during the moratorium? (Like after older people die.) Need to be exceptions for cases when the house is beyond repair and resident owners who want to make improvements to continue living there.
2. How does this fit with the DTG mission? Because of the need for more diverse housing stock that allows for greater diversity of incomes.
3. Concern about seniors who seek to sell their houses.
4. A developer can buy and hold it for two years? Yes, that's right.
5. It can take several tries to get a warrant article through. You can find others to work with to improve this and increase the chance of passage.

The mission is to preserve small Cape and other small houses built before 1950 with a footprint of 1,000 sq feet or less.

Yes: 8

Abstain: 1

New business:

Moment of silence to honor Daunte Wright.

Mass Ave Vigil group this weekend to honor Asian Americans who lost their lives, Saturday between 6-7pm, and talking about something special for the anniversary of George Floyd's death.

Awareness of a brewing controversy over the Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture--Arts Arlington Youth Banner Initiative. The banners are hanging in Arlington Center on Mass. Ave heading from Pleasant Street towards Cambridge. A sub-group volunteered to meet later this week to discuss the controversy and what if any should be DTG's response. The sub-group will respond back to the full group at the May meeting.